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Town of Durham

JUN 10 2020

Planning, Assessing  
and Zoning

June 10, 2020

To the Planning Board:

I wanted to thank Robin Mower and John Parry for their excellent letters to the Board regarding the current landscaping proposal for Mill Plaza. Both made exceptionally good points about the current design (I agree with all of these) and I hope that board members take heed. Given the thoroughness of their comments, I don't have anything to add except to emphasize Robin Mower's point on "Conditional Use" and also to show examples of what could be achieved.

As a "Conditional Use" application, I ask that the board use their authority to do what's best for the town. What do we want? I'm sure I speak for most Durham citizens when I say we want a user friendly, aesthetically pleasing parking lot. Given that CDA is requesting student housing which is NOT what residents want to see at Mill Plaza, then as part of that condition (and despite them wanting to wrap up the landscaping at tonight's meeting) that they be obliged to spend more time and resources developing a better designed landscaping plan for the plaza.

A creatively designed parking lot can make a huge impact for the look and feel of a town. Thus far, each rendition has given the impression that the CDA has designed and placed the buildings and parking spaces where they want them, and then, as an after thought, added the landscaping to fit in to their design. But a well designed space should feel synergistic – the landscaping should be incorporated into the design, not added on.

I've attached image #1084 to exemplify this point.

Attached image #1082 – I think incorporating an entire median to seating and landscaping as seen in this image would work well at the front end of the plaza (about where the Hannaford Farm entrance is sited). Perhaps you could eliminate caps at the end of each parking bay to make up for the lost parking. But however it's done, there needs to be more thought given to establishing adequate shade and seating.

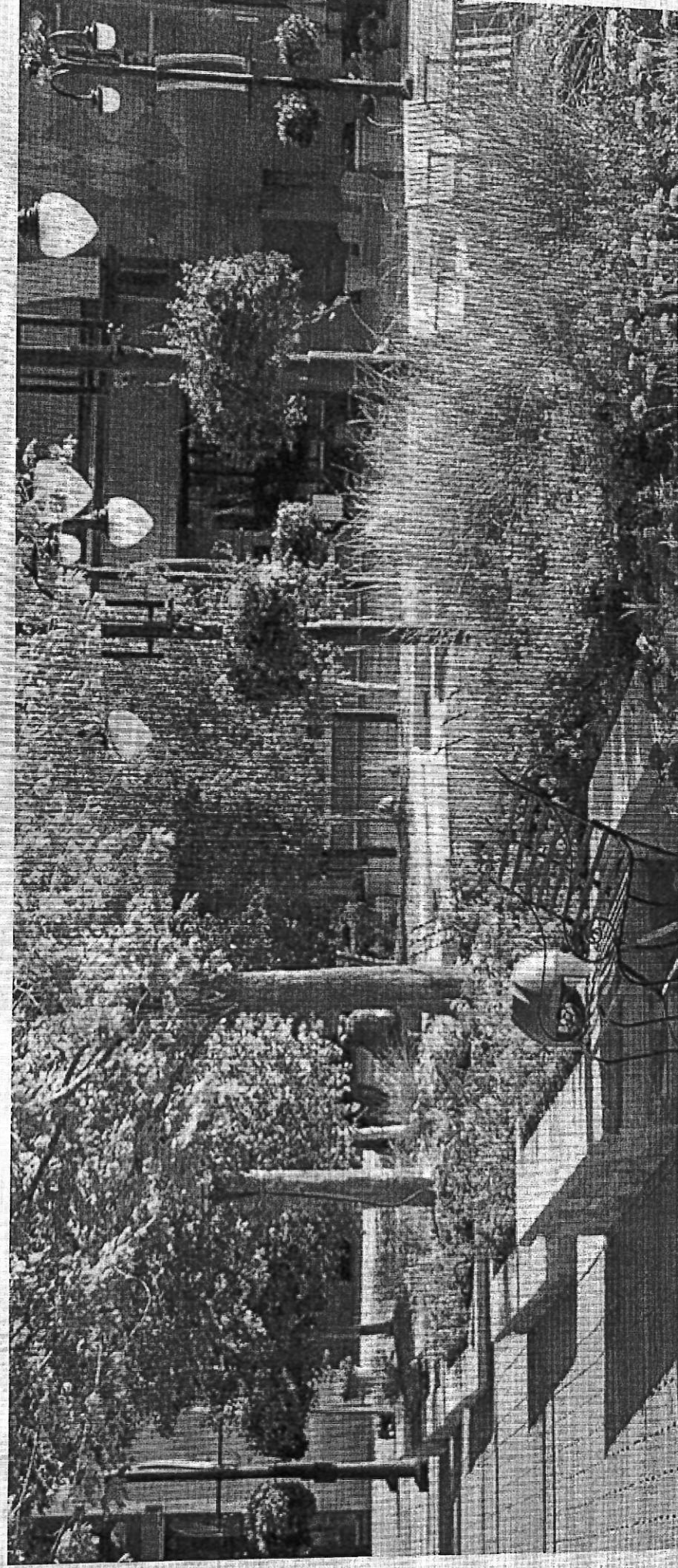
As John Parry notes, pear trees, very over used in municipal plantings, are not a good choice for this site. I've attached another image #1083 as an example of the size and shape the trees should be. Whatever specimen of tree is chosen, they should create canopies that not only provide shade in the summer but are also aesthetically pleasing.

Thank you for your time,

Catherine Meeking  
1 Orchard Drive, Durham

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#### MARKETS / RETAIL / STRIP MALLS



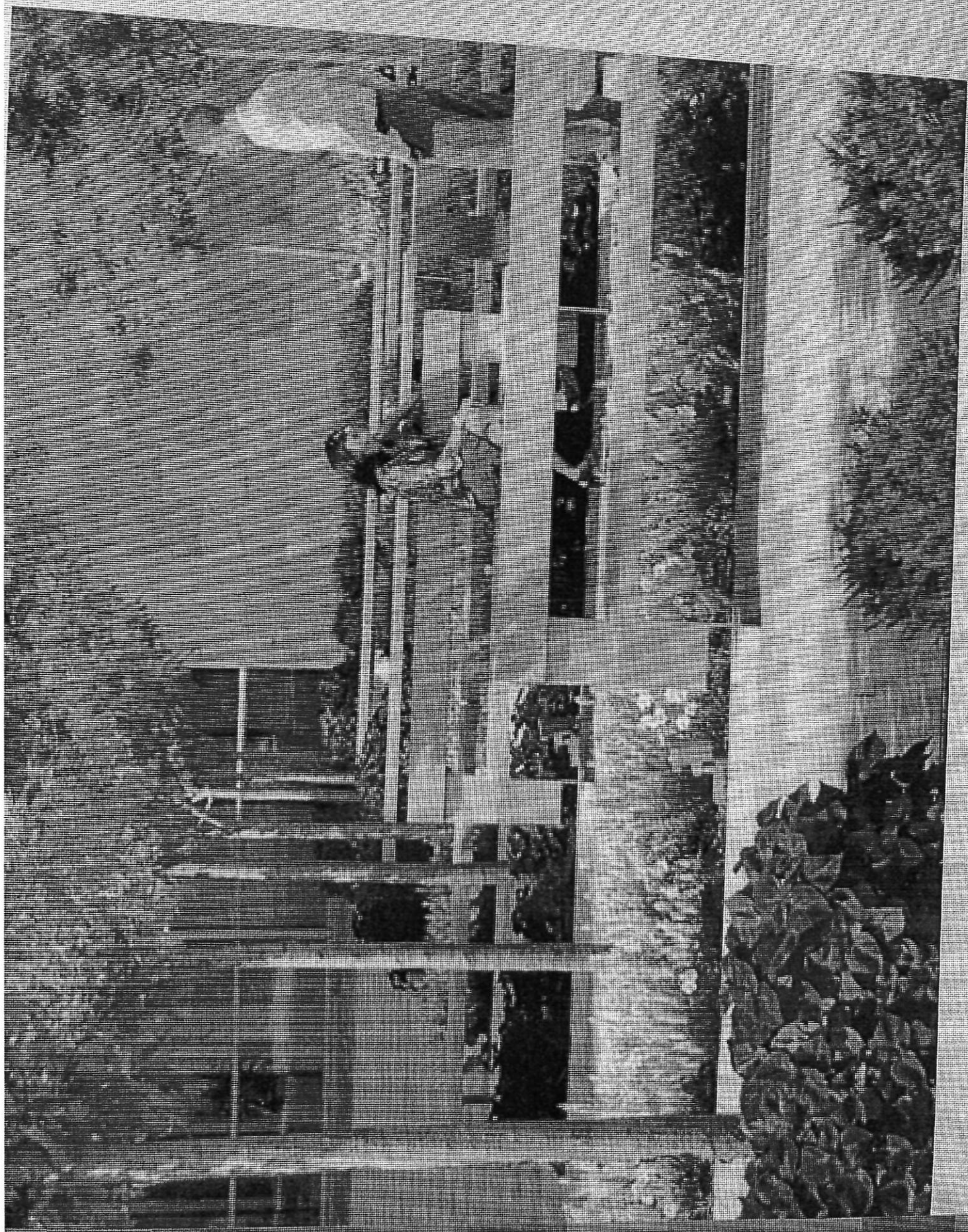
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